

EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT
On the observership visit at the Zurich Psychiatric services
02-13 March 2015
By Bhathika Perera

REPORT:

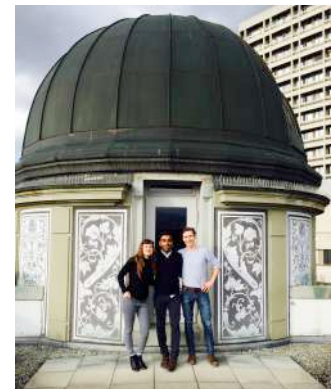
Introduction

I am a consultant psychiatrist in the UK working in Intellectual disability psychiatry. My main contact was Professor Wulf Rossler from Zurich.

Two weeks placement

I spent two weeks in Zurich in early March 2015.

I visited Collegium Helveticum, which is considered as a laboratory for transdisciplinary research. Having worked in multidisciplinary teams through out my medical career, I was excited to see how team working has gone to next level which is trans/interdisciplinary level to answer complex research questions which cannot be fully understood or successfully tackled using the methods, concepts and knowledge base of any single discipline. I was able to spend time with various professionals and PhD students to get a clear understanding about various research projects carried out in this unit.



My next visit to was to translational Neuromodeling Unit (TNU) at Wilfriedstrasse 6, Zürich. This is a combine project between University of Zurich and ETH Zurich. Dr. Helene Rossler introduced me to the unit and provided support through out my stay at the Unit. The mission of the TNU is to develop mathematical models to understand mechanisms of brain disease using non invasive techniques such as observing behaviour and neuronal activity. This was a novel experience for me as this was the first time I was introduced to this new scientific approach to exploring psychiatric illnesses. I participated in their activities such as multidisciplinary meetings, research topic discussions and teaching. I also observed how research was carried out in the unit.





I also spent time at the Centre for addiction treatment of the Psychiatric University Hospital at Selnaustrasse 9, Zurich. I was able to see how services were delivered for people with various addiction problems. This involved substitution treatment for various substance addictions. This was an interesting service given the extent of drug problems in Zurich while ago.



My next visit was to Psychiatric University Hospital at Lenggstrasse 31, Zurich. I spent time in ward C2 (special ward for depression and anxiety disorders) and ward A2 (acute ward for migrants). This hospital is an interesting place for any one interested in psychiatry as Eugen Bleuler who coined the term Schizophrenia, was a director at this hospital. This hospital was called Burgholzli prior to change of name to Psychiatric University Hospital. I was able to spend time with different professionals.

I also visited day hospital and crisis admission unit. I had the opportunity to spend time with the team doctors, nurses, occupational therapists and art therapists.

Summary :

I am pleased to say that my experience was well above my expectations. I was able to spend time in clinical and research settings. Clinical settings involved spending time in in-patient and out patient units for patients presenting different mental health issues. Spending time at the University and various research units gave me insight into research and academic activities. The whole experience gave me a wider understanding of mental health services in Zurich and how it is different and similar to the UK. I was able to reflect on differences in philosophy of care and patient expectations and how it has shaped services in different countries. I feel I am more equipped and more experienced as a Consultant psychiatrist following my visit to Zurich under 'Gaining experience programme'. This will help me to shape the services that I work to deliver better patient care. I have also made contacts with professionals in Zurich and we will be starting collaborative research projects soon.

I felt welcomed by every single professional I worked with. Prof Rossler organised a structured and well balanced programme during my stay in Zurich. I did not encounter any problems during the placement.

Acknowledgement:

First I would like to start thanking European psychiatrists Association for providing me this wonderful opportunity to participate in this programme to gain a valuable experience. A big thank goes to Professor Wulf Rossler who organized a brilliant programme for my two week stay. I would also like to thank Dr Helene Rossler, Dr. Diana Wotruba, Dr. Huys Quentin, Dr Pausch and many other professionals who made my time in Zurich memorable.